

Dance Notes

San Diego's SQ Cavalcade

A gala spirit reigned in Balboa Park during the week-end of November 14-15 when square dancers of California's "Deep South" converged for their third annual Fiesta de la Cuadrilla. At least three thousand gaily costumed dancers milled, squared and danced in rounds, all having a marvelous time in three large halls of the exposition buildings. Many were the callers, all doing their utmost best, and a good time time was refelcted in the faces of dancers and spectators alike.

The sole criticism may lie in their exhibitional part which was held in the open air arena on the afternoon of the 15th. While "entre nous" everything goes in the spirit of fun, even the dancing of a burlesque can-can and parading it under the name of "square dancing," when a program is given which is supposed to represent certain historic eras or regional traits to hundreds of spectators, then it is open to critical examination. For then there is no room for misrepresentation, whether of style or "historic background narration." I saw but the first half of the program; there the Contra Dance, Kentucky Running Set, Polka Round Dance (Hot Pretzels), the Quadrille, Pioneer, Spanish Lancers, all looked alike and undistinguishable in manner of execution and spirit even though the pattern may have changed. All looked like "barn dances"; while it was O.K. for the "pioneer" number, it was NOT in the other presentations. In this section only the Spanish Contra Danza (Buzz Brown) of arly California and the Italian Quadrille (Vivian Woll) were in character, and even then the Italian, if anything, is much newer than some of the dances which the narrator claimed influenced American square dancing. Perhaps square dancing is still too new in this part of the deep south and three years did not give sufficient time to learn the various regional traits. Let us hope greater care will be taken during future programs. Otherwise, though, it was terrific. It is fiestas like these which this sick and sorry world needs, and "we'll study war no more."

Fin

Slavic Dance Program

Those who missed the program of Slavic Dances on November 29th at San Francisco's Legion of Honor Palace missed a delightful treat. The little hall was jam-packed, with even standing room occupied, and every spectator was thrilled to the marrow with what they saw. Serbia, Croatia, Poland, Bulgaria, Ukraina, Czechoslovakia, Bosnia, Romania (though not a Slavic nation), Russia and Macedonia were represented. Each group was well trained and all did their parts most creditably. The most charming of all the dances was the Romanian "Hora from Auashului" by Changs Folk dancers. Unique was the Bosnian number "Begovsko" by the Choral Dance Group. The only group that was not en par with the rest of the program was Poland, especially the Krakowiak. The fault lay not with the dancers, who were excellent, but with the character and nature of the dances. They lacked the Polish quality and spirit. Especially the Krakowiak which was done with a type of Mazur-Oberek step to a polka musical count, containing Hungarian mannerism and Hollywood gloss. If the music had not been played one would not have known which of the two dances was the Mazur, so similar were they in style. This lack of national trait was not evident in any other presentation. Most dances had a ballet quality about them. Many of the compositions were choreographed; however as this was announced in each case, there was no misrepresentations. All in all, everything was done in a breathtakingly excellent style, and definitely theatrical.

Again each group deserves laudations with perhaps a special pat on the shoulders to the Slavic Ethnic Group (Yania Wassilewska) and to the Dance Guild (Grace San Filippo) for all their renditions, to Changs (Jack Mathison) for their Hora, to the S. F. Ballet Group (A. Joukowsky) for their Timonia (Byelorussian) and the Macedonian renditions. The Choral Group (Marvin Hartfield) did but one number and all were charmed by it.

The Master - director himself, Anatole Joukowski (Zukowsky), is a very accomplished, virile and agile dancer, and his partner, Yania Wassilewa, was his equivalent in a

feminine way. The narrations by Bernice Peterson helped a great deal toward the understanding the background of the dances. The costumes, to use trite expression, were out of this world, all following traditional forms to the most minute detail. Many cheers and a "Bravo" to the directors, groups and co-workers.

Kolo Festival



John Filich and some of his Kolomaniacs from along the Coast (Los Angeles up to Portland). (Foto—Ace Smith)

In San Francisco's California Hall during November 28-29, the Second Annual Kolo Festival was held and a very successful affair it was. Dancing to the excellent Tamburitsa orchestra of the Crlenica Brothers was a treat in itself. The spirit which reigned in the hall was terrific and wholesome. But above everything it was very ethnic in its entire make-up even tho the audience was mainly composed of synthetic Slavs. It was a type of an affair one expects to see out East, or at a VILTIS anniversary shindig. Unlike the stilted local events which do only a certain prescribed program of pattern dances this one included, as one expects at ethnic affairs, polkas, csardases, waltzes and other non-pattern dances which each one does as he pleases.

But dancing wasn't everything. There was a program of selections played on the Tamburitsas, Ante Soljanich in his very clear tenor rendered some beautiful Yugoslav songs. here was delicious dinner of Sarma, struddle and stuff prepared by Mrs. John Filcich, Sr. Movies of Yugoslavia was shown by Dick Turdeau of Seattle and Millie Von Konsky of Oakland. Her presentation was particularly interesting, for she showed the renown Yugoslav dancers as they participated at the International Folk Festival held last season in France.

Interesting also was to see the Yugoslav Gypsies who, when the spirit moved them, entered the Kolo circle and did some fancy Turko-Balkan type of jigging and dancing. Indeed, every minute was an enjoyable one. Much credit to John Filcich, the instigator, and to all his helpers and committees, all of whom worked hard and actually slaved to make this festival an enjoyable one.

WORLD'S LONGEST SQUARE DANCE

Dashing Cal Golden and his Golden Squares sponsored the "Longest Square Dance" marathon. It lasted 25 hours! In Jewish they say, "Gezunt un Meshuga"—"Healthy but Nuts"; however, it was fun... loads of fun and it's fun to be nuts sometimes, as long as we are healthy and can take 25 hours of continuous squaring. This shindig was held in the IOOF Hall of San Bernardino, Cal. It started at 11:00 P.M. on Dec. 31st till midnight of Jan 1st. Even during breakfast they danced in three halls. Twenty five guests from a number of Western States (including Texas and Oklahoma) pitched in with the "MC'ing" and guest callers galore added their vocal cords for variety. Three orchestras took turns to play and the the "Coffee Shoppe" did its best to keep the dancers' eyes open without the support of tooth-picks. Buzz Brown's square creation, "Swiss Yodeling Boy" was a hit as he had (by special demand) to call it ten times during the marathon.



Landlubbers taking a canoe trip to "Hawaii" in the Stockton sorority of the College of the Pacific with the only water in sight coming from taps. It's the Heela they are practicing with Puilis in their hands.

(Foto—Aee Smith)

Santa Monica Xmas Party

Leave it to the Californians. What with Hollywood in their midst they know how to put things over in a big and fancy way. Santa Monica's annual Christmas folk dance was also one of those terrific and very enjoyable fiestas. And who ever fixed up the stage certainly deserves compliments for the appropriate setting and taste. The schedule of participative dances were well chosen and of a large variety. Everyone present was in a holiday mood and felt it was an afternoon enjoyably spent. The costumes, too, were varied and colorful.

During intermissions there were series of formal exhibitions. The first on were the Tiny Twirlers of Joy Cramlet. They were a group of tiny oldsters of about seven years of age who danced well American square dances with all the aplomb of attention loving adults. They were followed by Los Dazantes of Mildred and Keamer Walter. Their Zadunga in the colorful Tehuanas and adorned Jicaras was interesting enough. Their Potorrico (Los Machetes) lacked the wim and vigor tied into this dance, but since this dance was performed by people well in their years it was done rather well.

During the second intermission a group from Bakersfield (Circle 8, Wilma Linscott) elegantly garbed in various regional costumes of Hungary performed a Toborzo Csardastanc with all the elan Magyar dances require. They were followed by a series of Yemenite style dances which Millie Libaw brought back from her recent tour to Israel (direction - Albert Pill). Except for Kumu Ekchah, which was not Yemenite, but another mish-mash similar to Mayim and Harmonica, the dances had the quiet charm or gayety of the Temanim. Particularly lovely was Adarim (flocks of sheep) and Hava Netsey BeMakhol (Let us dance). The costumes, all white with trimming, for the women showed a very modified Yemenite influence, for the men a Russian. The Gandy dancers brought the house down with their Moldavia Yula. The applause was strong enough to have walls of Jericho come tumbling down once again. Bravo!

During the third intermission the Polonia Folk Dance Group (Mieczyslaw Tomzynski) appeared. Their first number was Zbojnicki performed by a man and a woman, both were agile and virile in their dancing. The man was terrific. There was plenty ethnic flavor in this number. Tho it is true that the Ukrainians influenced Goral dancing, in this number the male overstepped the boundary and did an overwhelming number of pure Ukrainian Prisyadkies. It was a very showy rendition and well received. hey were followed by a Mazur Solo danced by a girl in a Krakowski costume. She may be a good dancer, but for a Mazur solo one has to be exceptional or else do a ballet interpretation, otherwise it looks like a series of clod-hopping and hand throwing and a lot of hard labor gone to waste. As the Pole says: "Nie do Bogu - nie do ludzie." It was neither presentable to God nor to people. The Kuja-wiak performed by a group in Lowiec costumes was multi-figured and well done.

Then came the Terpsichores (Lary Hoyer) whose presentation seemed to have thrown a number of folk dancers into consternation: A French Apache number portraying the sordid life in French dives of Montemarte. As a novelty number it was excellently performed. The people must

have practiced very hard, or they are good dancers. It was perfect. All four couples kept good time. Their character portrayal was excellent (too natural), the acrobatics flawless. In a nightclub this sort of thing would receive acclaim. While it still merits acclaim, my humble opinion is that it was way out of place at the festival where drunkenness, robbery, stabbing-in-the-back and sexuality are not glorified (at least not openly). Novelty numbers as such can be and should be occasionally presented at folk festivals. By all means! There is such a wide field to obtain inspiration, from jitterburg and up (or down), without need to search the gutter for inspiration. I may be wrong. But the dancers were precise and good in every sense of the word. Would love to see them perform in something more inspirational and elating.

The festival itself was "Wunderbar!" Every member should feel elated at the success and the joy it gave the hundreds present. Banzai!

(VFB)

30th International Institute Festival

Pat Permelee Reporting

At our 30th Annual International Festival this past October, which filled our Los Angeles building and grounds to the bursting point, the outstanding exhibits were the Finnish, Latvian, Lithuanian and Polish. Excellent, too, were the Danish and Egyptian; small but good—the Chinese, Dutch, Hungarian and Islamic... And Los Angeles has some fine quality dance and choral groups. I was delighted but not surprised to find the Lithuanian group, directed by Mrs. Zaikis, up to standard. (Mrs. Zaikis is one of the original Ateitis members of Chicago - VFB). Others in like category are the Swedish Vasa, Polish Ampol and Austrian dance groups, and the Swiss and Czech choruses. Father Espellote brought his fascinating French Basque "flock". Some of our own teen-agers gave an exquisite exhibition of Japanese dances, and one of our young adult Mexican-American groups, dances from Mexico and Spain. The Filipinos were there with their inimitable Tinikling. A young man from China played on the two-stringed violin, and an instrumental Japanese group made a picture that lives in the memory. Other countries contributing their folklore sincerely and typically were Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary, Latvia, Estonia, Russia and Armenia. The last named with two groups—newcomers full of spirit—the other an instrumental one led by no less than the famous Shah Baronian on his Tar. Another time I hope we may have the Yugoslavs, Portugese, Greeks, etc., etc. Ah, what a wealth is ours in these United States.

The best part of the festival and of all such festivals, was the big group of volunteers working together to make it possible. Some 900 in this case.

CROATIAN CULTURAL CLUB

JUNE LOESCH

"...the organization is meant primarily to be a group devoted to studying the various dances, songs and playing of the native music of all parts of the country." And with this in mind Eleanore Dragos and Mrs. Mike Mataya sent out the invitation which organized the largest kolo group in the Pacific Northwest, the Croatian Cultural Club.

Since its inception, just a little over a year ago, the Club has gained popularity as an exhibition dance group and has carried their activities far beyond their initial expectations. In addition to dancing at function of the Seattle Croatian Fraternal Lodge, the group has appeared on several television shows, a radio program, danced at a local Import Week Show, exhibited costumes during All Nations Week, presented an hour and a half program at Fort Lewis for a contingent of soldiers who were awaiting shipment to Korea, and danced for numerous other groups.

In August the Club presented "Plameno Kolo" and Hrvatska Drmes" at the International Folk Dance Council of Washington Festival held each year at Enumclaw, Washington. They were accompanied by a tamburitza orchestra conducted by Anton Susanj. This was the first time that live music had been used for a dance demonstration and also the first time that many of those attending had ever seen or heard a tambura. Needless to say, the presence of the orchestra aroused much interest in their music and instruments.

When the Kolo Festival was held in San Francisco in December, the Croatian Cultural Club had six of its members